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ABSTRACT

Discussed are the growth and demise of pedology within the contexts of the (1) early history of child study in Europe, (2) influence of Vygotsky's writings on Soviet defectology, and (3) struggle of Soviet psychology for its Marxist-dialectical identity. Pedology is the scientific study of the complete child in all its facets, including the biological, psychological, and sociological. In this paper, the history of the discipline is traced from its antecedents in 19th century European empiricism, through the first world congress of pedology, held in Brussels, Belgium, in 1911, to its expansion in the emerging Soviet psychology and pedalogy in the 1920s. After providing a biographic outline of Vygotsky's early accomplishments, his interest in pedology is noted. It is pointed out that Vygotsky was recognized as a leading pedologist in the USSR, and that he delivered several lectures and wrote several published books on the pedology of children of various ages, while criticizing the testing movement associated with the discipline. The decline of pedology is located at the time of Stalin's increased suspiciousness of foreign influences, in the prominence of Makarenko in Soviet education, in Medinsky's criticisms of pedology in general and psychological testing in particular, and in the Central Committee's pronouncement that pedology was pseudo-scientific and anti-Marxist. (RH)

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Vygotsky and the history of pedology

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This paper will discuss briefly the growth and demise of pedology within the context of the early history of child study in Europe, influence of Vygotsky's writings upon Soviet defectology, and the struggle of Soviet psychology for its Marxist-dialectical identity.

Readers of American publications must have noticed an increased interest in Soviet psychology in the 1970's and 1980's (for example: Brozek and Mecacci, 1974; Brozek and Slobin, 1972; Cole, 1984; Holowinsky, 1978, 1985, 1986; Kozulin, 1986; Rahman, 1973; Razran, 1971; Russell, 1984; Staud and Misiak, 1984). It is probable that a future reader may refer to the 1980's as the decade of increased international interests in psychology and education. "International" became a popular word, with some Journals emphasizing "international" in their title. The most recent addition to this group is the International Journal of Special Education, published in Canada.

Perhaps no other Soviet psychologist generated as much interest among American psychologists as did L.S. Vygotsky. His contributions have been widely discussed both in the USA and USSR and a number of his works have been translated into English.

Soviet sources (Tutundzhian, 1983) lists forty nine separate references in English to Vygotsky. Tutundziahn, (1983) also mentions M. Cole and J.S. Bruner as the prominent researchers

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of Vygotsky's works. Recently, Vygotsky received a distinctly unique honor in the Soviet Union as psychologist. In December of 1981, a conference was organized in Moscow devoted entirely to his works. Nineteen papers and six panels discussed in depth his contributions. This was the first such conference in the USSR organized in honor of one psychologist (Radzikhovsky, 1982). Yet, in the 1930's, at the height of criticism of pedology, Vygotsky's work was pronounced as "eclectic" and "erroneous" (Kozulin, 1986) and parts of his book "Thought and Speech" were prohibited from publication (Kolbanovsky, 1968). Vygotsky's work "Historical meaning of psychological crisis," written in 1926 has not yet been published (Radzikhovsky, 1979). The years of Vygotsky's professional activity (1924-1934), were most turbulent in Soviet psychology. Those were also the years of the growth and demise of pedology in the Soviet Union, the development, which has not been adequately discussed in American psychological literature.

The roots of child study in Europe can be traced to the philosophical influence of empiricism. It is evident that empiricism was very strong in Europe in the 19th century and it did influence the thinking of Itard and Seguin, pioneers in the education and training of the handicapped and the mentally retarded (Spitz, 1986). Toward the end of the 19th century and the beginning of the 20th century, a strong movement known as pedology emerged in Europe. It was defined as the study of the child in all its facets (Depaepe, 1985). In the Fall of

1909, professor Twardowski organized with a group of teachers in Lviv (at that time in Austro-Hungary) pedological society. Next year, a similar society was organized in Cracow (Grudzinska, 1912). A number of noted Journals of child study were in existence at that time. In the United States, G. Stanley Hall began publication in 1891 of Pedagogical Seminary. In the United Kingdom, The Paidologist (later renamed The Child Study) was published. In Germany, Meumann and Lay edited the journal Die Experimentelle Padagogik. In France, A. Binet began to publish some of his earlier works in L'Annee Psychologique. Pedologists maintained that the child study depends on three major variables: biological, psychological, and sociological. There was an attempt to design pedology according to the natural science moded. The first world congress of pedology, held in 1911 in Brussels, Belgium, was attended by nearly three hundred participants representing twenty two countries (Depaepe, 1985). Among noted speakers, who addressed the congress was V.M. Bekhtiarev, founder of the School of Reflexology. In 1912, in Brussels, the congress provided initiative for the establishment of the Faculte Internationale de Pedologie (Depaepe, 1985).

In the academic year 1913-1914, there were thirty students in attendance representing a number of European countries. Huerta (as reported by Depaepe, 1985) suggested that the field of study of pedology should be devided into three areas, which he named: pure, applied, auxiliary. Some examples of the areas of study, as suggested by Huerta, are listed in this place:

Pure (anatomy of children, physiology, child pathology, characteralogy, paedometry, psychosomatic study); Applied (child care, pediatry, art of child evaluation); Auxiliary (anatomy, histology, cytology, biophysics, general biology, psychology, sociology). The first World War and political upheavels in Europe interrupted the work of Faculte' Internationale de Pedologie.

Interest in pedology manifested itself considerably within emerging Soviet psychology and education in the 1920's. A number of reasons accounted for this interest. It should be remembered that Bekhtiarev, himself, was one of the pioneers of European pedology. In 1912, Bekhtierev edited the Journal of Psychology, Criminal Anthropology and Pedology. There was a general climate in the 1920's in the Soviet Union, which fostered attempts at child study and restructuring of education upon materialistic, empirical and scientific foundations. Finally, an appropriate climate for "child study" has been created by the Communist party's explicit need to develop a "new" person, the builder of Communist society.

It is clear that the growth and demise of pedology in the Soviet Union can only be understood within the context of Soviet psychology, Marxist ideology, and the socio-political realities of that time. As described by Leontiev and Luria (1956), already during the initial years of Soviet rule a group of revolutionary psychologists began a campaign for Marxist orientation in psychology. Chelpanov became their target, who

at that time was director of the Psychological Institute of Moscow University. The struggle was led by Kornilov, who soon was joined by a group of young psychologists, among them, Vygotsky. Kornilov argued in the 1920's that psychology to become Marxist must be materialistic, political and dialectical. He is considered as a first Russian psychologist who became "Soviet" in the political as well as ideological sense (Orlova, 1979). In 1923, at the first Russian psychoneurological congress, Kornilov accused Chelpanov of being an adherent of Wundt's introspective psychology and an adversary of behaviorism. Chelpanov was removed as the director of the Institute of Psychology and replaced by Kornilov. The intensity of the initial polemics could perhaps be best illustrated by the fact that during only ten years (1920-1930) four different orientations evolved within Soviet psychology. McLeish (1975) lists those as: a) Sechenov's and Bekhtiarev's "reflexology"; b) Pavlov's "Conditional reflexes"; c) Kornilov's "reactology"; d) Vygotsky's "Cultural-historical" emphasis.

Perhaps no other psychologist achieved such a degree of influence in the Soviet Union and became widely known in the West as Lev S. Vygotsky. His achievement is even more remarkable when we consider that Vygotsky died at the age of 38 and published most of his works in the ten year period (1924-1934).

Vygotsky was born on November 5, 1896 in Orsha, near Homel, presently Belorussian SSR. He completed high school in 1913,

and graduated from Moscow University in 1917. For the next six years (1917-1923), he was a teacher of literature and psychology at a highschool in the city of Homel (Cole, 1978). Perhaps under the influence of his literary interests, Vygotsky's first paper written in 1915 was a psychological discussion of Hamlet. In 1924, Vygotsky participated in psychoneurological convention and delivered a paper on methodology of psychological and reflexological research (Radzikhovsky, 1979). As a result of his presentation, he was invited to join the Moscow Institute of Psychology. At the Institute, Vygotsky concentrated his efforts on the study of memory, attention, will, arithmetical operations and comprehension of language (Kozulin, 1986). He also played an outstanding role in the establishment and development of Soviet psychology (Smirnov, 1967).

Vygotsky is credited by Leontiev, his former colleague and a prominent Soviet psychologist, with introducing the emphasis upon "a tool" as a crucial concept in the understanding of human behavior. This was an important notion, since within the context of Marxist philosophy it is the discovery by human beings of "the tool of production," which lead to the socio-cultural evolution. As a result, a so called "instrumental" emphasis in Soviet psychology emerged in the early 1920's, before "cultural-historical" emphasis became firmly established.

Leontiev (1986) points out that the classical S -- R reflexological paradigm was changed to read: "Not from stimulus to

reaction, but from stimulus through a tool (represented as triangle) to reaction" (Leontiev, 1986, p. 110).

Vygotsky introduced into psychology an historical approach to the understanding of human mental development and the study of child's mental development based upon Marxist ideology. He maintained that from a psychological point of view a physical defect has meaning as a disturbance of the social form of behavior. He regarded training and education as a systematic, purposeful and conscious influence on the natural growth process of the child's organism. Leontiev and Luria (1956), former students and coworkers of Vygotsky, provided some explanation for his psychological position. They consider Vygotsky as one of the first Soviet psychologists who recognized the importance of the study of consciousness for the materialistic psychology. He pointed out that by ignoring the problem of consciousness psychology ignors complex problems of human behavior. By excluding the question of consciousness from the realm of scientific psychology, one perpetuates the dualism of subjective psychology.

Leontiev (1986), tells us that Soviet psychologists recognized a need to emphasize in the behavior and reaction of humans this aspect of behavior that definitely distinguishes human behavior from the behavior of other animals. It is of interest that the question of consciousness, as a valid problem for psychology to study, has been recently suggested again (for example, Jennings, 1986). Furthermore, Vygotsky

maintained that Marxist psychology must be able to explain all phenomena of human behavior. Vygotsky described his psychological theory as cultural-historical, viewing development of all higher cortical functions within the context of social evolution. His interest in developmental psychology enhanced his interest in child study or pedology.

Pedology occupied considerable place in the psychological literature of the Soviet Union in the 1920's. It became dominent in pedagogical institutes in educational establishments and in the literature. However, some Soviet writers (Kolbanowsky, 1968) suggested that a lack of critical attitude toward pedology soon led to abuses and "mistakes." In 1925, the first edition of Blonsky's Pedology appeared and in a few months there was a demand for the second edition. Luria's positive evaluation of pedology, written in 1928, is a characteristic indication of high esteem held by it in the 1920's. He stated that much has been done in Russia in the field of pedology. Luria described pedology as a science of developing organism and its somatic, psychological and social aspects. He underscored that: "It is the first time that pedology has been regarded not as child psychology and not as experimental pedagogy, but as a genetic science of the growth of the child" (Luria, 1928, p. 350).

However, almost from the beginning of the growth of pedology, there were forces in the Soviet Union opposed to it. It is somewhat curious that only three years after the

publication of his well accepted book on pedology, Blonsky indicated that he no longer considered himself a pedologist (Nikolskaya, 1974). It was not until the 1950's that Blonsky's contributions were again recongized.

In addition to Blonsky, Vygotsky was also recongized as a leading pedologist in the USSR. He delivered several lectures on pedology of preschool children, pedology of school age children, and the pedology of teenagers. The lectures were delivered at the Second Moscow State University. In 1929, he published a chapter on the structure of interests of adolescents and the interests of the teenage workers, which appeared in the Problems of Pedology and the Teenage Worker. In 1934, in Moscow, Vygotsky published Fundamentals of Pedology, and in the same year, a book with an intriguing title: "Fascism in Psycho-neurology."

Vygotsky's ideas about children are contained in his book "Pedology of Preadolescent," published in 1931 (Elkonin, 1976). In this book, Vygotsky criticized naturalistic theories of child play. He emphasized that childs play is primarily social in nature. It is also anticipatory of future social activity. Vygotsky emphasized that the psychological development of the child takes place within the realm of the child's interaction with adults. What the child can not do alone, he may be able to do with help from an adult. This interaction determines the childs further development. Vygotsky believed that what a child can do today with help from an adult, he will be able to do

alone tomorrow. This thinking suggested to Vygotsky a notion of the "zone of proximal devlelopment," where the baseline is what a child can do alone without help, and the range of possibilities is determined by what a child can do with help from an adult. Leontiev and Luria explained that Vygotsky persistently argues against attempts to understand development of child's individual consciousness as spontaneous result of the influence of social consciousness. Leontiev and Luria (1956, p. 22) consider this view to be the central position of all of Vygotsky's criticism of Piaget.

Vygotsky, in spite of his support for pedology, also criticized psychometric methods of that time. He pointed out that pedology will become a science only when it learns to diagnose not only on the basis of arithmetical averages of the tests, but on the analysis of psychological process (Shakhelovich, 1974).

Vygotsky's own view of pedology has been published in 1931 in an article entitled: "Questions of pedology and sciences associated with it," which was printed in Pedologia (Pedology, 3, 52-58). In this article, Vygotsky reviewed early history of pedology, view on pedology of G.S. Hall, and his own views. He pointed out that pedology considered itself not as a particular science among other specific sciences, but as a general science of child development. He criticized, in his judgment, subjectively-idealistic foundations upon which pioneers of Western pedology attempted to construct the new science.

Vygotsky was critical of G.S. Hall for his, what Vygotsky described, as a mechanistic approach to the methodology of the new science. He pointed out that emerging alongside other sciences, pedology needs to depend upon them. The problems of mutual interdependency with other sciences is of paramount importance. He suggested that such a relationship needs to be understood in terms of dialectical logic. According to Vygotsky, development from a holistic perspective should be understood as a continuous struggle and resolution of contradictions.

It is surprising that at the time of the campaign against pedology, Vygotsky himself was accused of advocating mass psychological testing (Cole, 1978). Leontiev and Luria (1956), provided some explanation for the criticism of Vygotsky. They acknowledged that Vygotsky criticized the testing movement associated with pedology. However, they maintained that he commited an "error" by not criticizing pedology as a field of study and by publishing some of his works in pedological journals.

Pedology became an easy target at the time of Stalin's increased suspiciousness of foreign influences. The fight against pedology was led by Makarenko and Medinsky. Prominence of Makarenko in Soviet education seemed to be associated with two factors; being a staunch Communist, a "Checkist," and his friendship with Gorki, a noted Russian writer admired by Stalin. Makarenko became friendly with Gorki in early 1920's and in

1929 Gorki published an article where he described Makarenko as a Soviet educator of the "new type" (Kairov, et al., 1950, p. 694). Makarenko maintained extreme environmentalistic and behavioristic position. He disregarded information on past behavior and believed that it is possible to train a "new person" by employing appropriate educational strategy. Such line of thinking was very appealing to Stalin, who promised to build a "new society." By profession, Makarenko was an elementary classroom teacher, who since 1905 was active as a revolutionary. In 1920, he was appointed administrator of the city school in Poltava. Between 1920 and 1937, Makarenko was in charge of various labor communes and penal colonies. In 1935, he was promoted to the assistant director of the NKVD labor colonies in Ukrainian SSR (Kairov, et al., 1950).

Equally critical of pedology in general and psychological testing in particular, was professor Medinsky. His criticism of standardized testing has been especially damaging: "Intelligence and achievement tests were made with such calculations that the children of the indigent parents should appear as weakly endowed and nonachieving. Those tests claiming objective proof were in reality the means to enable the children of the bourgeois' to continue their education and to except the children of toilers" (Melinsky, 1954, p. 179).

The final blow to pedology in the Soviet Union came in 1936, when the Central Committee of the Communist Party of the USSR pronounced pedology to be pseudo-scientific and anti-Marxist.

(Shore, 1947). Decision of the Central Committee terminated development of pedology and encouraged soviet educators and psychologists to develop "Marxist" child study.

In conclusion, it should be emphasized that growth and demise of pedology provides an historical example how pedagogical theories have been influenced by socio-political realities, philosophical attitudes and ideological considerations.

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